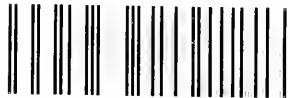


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SKETCHES OF THE LIVES AND SERVICES

II

OF

Ulysses S. Grant and Schuyler Colfax,

NATIONAL REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES FOR

PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

ULYSSES S. GRANT.



It is not surprising that great military leaders in all ages and among every people should have been rewarded with the highest public honors. Aside from the fact that the heroic qualities essential to military success are of all qualities the most universally admired, there is the more cogent reason that no other public benefactors put a nation under such direct and manifest obligations. The benefits conferred by the writer, the man of science, the inventor or the promoter of the useful arts, may sometimes be more valuable than those conferred by the victorious military chieftain; but when the successes of the latter are achieved in the service of liberty, or in defense of the very existence of a nation, they transcend all other forms of public benefaction. Advancement in art, science, literature and material wealth, brings with it inestimable blessings, but the freedom of a people and their independent national existence are the broad foundation upon which all other blessings rest. When these are assailed by either a foreign or domestic foe, and a nation, after mustering all its forces, finds its strength so equally matched that its fate trembles in the balance with the progress of the doubtful struggle, the man who calmly, courageously and skillfully directs its strenuous efforts to a success-

ful issue, confers a boon which a century of peaceful services could not balance, and engraves his name forever upon the memory of his people.

Our own country has not been wanting in gratitude to its military chieftains. Washington, Jackson, Taylor, Harrison and Pierce, have all been elected to the highest office in the gift of the people. Indeed we have been not only grateful but generous in this respect, measuring the services of our heroes rather by the patriotic spirit in which they were rendered than by the pressure of our need for them, or even their intrinsic value. Since the war for independence, in which Washington earned the affectionate title he will always bear, that of the "Father of his country," we have been involved in no struggle by which our national life was really imperiled until the breaking out of the late rebellion. Yet we have very properly remembered and rewarded the efforts of those who in less critical conjunctures advanced the national interests and vindicated the national honor.

But in history the great rebellion of 1861-5 will take rank with the revolutionary war as to its vital bearing on the nation's fate. Like that it was a life and death struggle, and the heroes who contributed most to bring it to a successful issue will be among those who will live longest in the memory of posterity. Their services are of that order which a nation cannot afford to overlook. To do so would not merely be deep ingratitude; it would be an example whose injurious effects upon the martial spirit of our people would be felt for all time to come.

But there is no danger that our history will be defaced by such a record. Already the party which during the war was the party of the Government as against its rebels has nominated as its candidate for the Presidency the most illustrious Commander of the Union Armies, General ULYSSES S. GRANT. His election in November next

is as sure as that the armies of the Union have triumphed over the armies of treason; and while this mark of national gratitude will be a fitting tribute to the valor, skill and patriotism of General Grant, it will plant the seeds of future victories and lay the foundation for future national glory through the incentive to the cultivation of similar qualities, which it will carry down to successive generations of Americans.

The subject of our brief sketch was born on the 27th of April, 1822. The place of his nativity was Point Pleasant, on the western bank of the Ohio river, now a village of about four hundred inhabitants, about twenty-five miles above Cincinnati. His father, Jesse Root Grant, moved thither from Pennsylvania nearly half a century ago, the place being then but a frontier settlement. The boy Ulysses received the rudiments of his education at the village school of Georgetown, Brown county, Ohio, about twenty miles from the place of his nativity, whither his parents moved when he was about a year old. As a boy, it is commonly said that he was in no way remarkable, and yet looking back we find that numerous incidents of his juvenile life which have been preserved in the memories of those who knew him, reveal clearly enough the great qualities which have since shed such lustre on his name, and conferred upon his country services never to be forgotten.

Among the stories told of him as a boy is one which is sufficiently illustrative of his character. His father sent him with a team to fetch a load of logs from the woods, where he was to find some men who were to put on his load. He found the logs but did not find the men. He did not turn round and drive back without them, nor did he sit down and wait for the men. But set his wits to work to devise a way to get the load on himself, and through some ingenious mechanical contrivance he succeeded. In this act we can see at once the energy, the skill to adapt means to ends, and the patient perseverance in the execution of a plan, which shines in the history of the great military commander.

In 1839 Grant, then seventeen years old, entered the military academy at West Point. Of his cadet life there is little to be said, save that he passed creditably through the course of studies pursued at that institution. As a proof that his fondness for horses had not abated, it may be mentioned that he attained the reputation of being the best rider in his class. In 1843 he graduated in the same class with General W. B. Franklin, General J. T. Quimby, General J. J. Reynolds, General C. C. Augur, General C. S. Hamilton, General F. Steele, General Rufus Ingalls, and General H. M. Judah. No second lieutenancy being vacant at the time of his graduation, he was commissioned Brevet

Second Lieutenant in the 4th U. S. Infantry. After some two years' service with his regiment on the frontier, he accompanied it to Texas, whither it was ordered in 1845, at the beginning of our troubles with Mexico. He served all through the Mexican war, participating in all its important battles, save that of Buena Vista—in all, in short, as one of his eulogists observes, "in which any one man could be." His first engagement was that of Palo Alto, fought under command of General Taylor, on the 8th of May, 1846. There is one of his exploits during this war which ought not to be omitted in this connection. At Monterey the brigade with which he served had nearly exhausted its ammunition. They were in the heart of the city, from which there was no egress but through a narrow street, the houses on one side of which were held by the Mexicans, who fired from the windows and the roofs. Some one must make his exit through this street and go to Walnut Springs, a distance of four miles, for ammunition. It was so perilous an adventure that the General in Command hesitated to order any one to undertake it, and called for some one to volunteer. Lieutenant Grant offered his services. Throwing himself upon a fleet horse, and adopting an expedient he had learned of the Indians during his frontier life, he caught his foot in the crupper of his saddle, and grasping the mane with his hands, hung upon the side of his horse farthest from the Mexicans, and then spurring the animal to its utmost speed, safely ran the gauntlet. In an hour he returned with the desired ammunition and an escort. He was repeatedly mentioned in the reports of his commanding officers for meritorious conduct; was appointed first lieutenant in the field for gallantry at Molino Del Rey, and brevetted captain for meritorious conduct in the battle of Chapultepec.

In 1848, after the Mexican war, Capt. Grant married a Miss Dent, from near St. Louis, and for several years lived in the monotonous routine of the peace establishment; at Detroit, at Sackett's Harbor, and in Oregon.

His full commission as captain reached him in August, 1853, but in 1854, having made up his mind that there was to be a long peace, he resigned his captaincy and set about establishing himself in civil life. His first attempt was to manage a small farm to the south-west of St. Louis, where he used to cut wood and haul it to Carondelet, delivering it himself. He diversified his year during summer, with acting as a collector of debts in that region. But there is nothing to show that he enjoyed either wood cutting or dunning, and he certainly did not grow rich at it. In 1859, he tried in vain to get the appointment of county engineer; and he then went into the leather trade, in partnership with his father, at Galena. The firm quick-

ly attained high standing for intelligence and integrity, and the business, at the breaking out of the war, was prosperous.

It is narrated that Grant's determination to enter the service against the rebellion was taken and stated along with the drawing on of his coat, instantly upon reading the telegram which announced the surrender of Sumter. He came into the store in the morning, read the dispatch, and as he took up his coat, which he had laid off, and put it on again, he observed in his quiet way, "The government educated me for the army, and although I have served through one war, I am still a little in debt to the government, and willing to discharge the obligation."

Grant, bringing with him a company of volunteers that he had enlisted, in a few days appeared in the council-chamber of Governor Yates, of Illinois, and tendered his services to the country as volunteer. The Governor immediately proposed to place him on his own staff, as mustering officer of volunteers.

Grant's brigadier's commission reached him August 9th, 1861, and his first service under it was, a march to Ironton, in Missouri, for the purpose of preventing an attack from the rebel Jeff Thompson.

Soon after this he was placed in command at the great central point of Cairo, which was the key of the West.

One of his first acts was the capture of Paducah, a strong post on the Ohio River, near the mouth of the Tennessee River, in Kentucky, by which he at once gained possession of interior navigable waters, which the traitors had been using for their own purposes. The strength and decision with which he took possession of the town intimidated all rebel sympathizers.

The remainder of Gen. Grant's military career must be narrated with a brevity which by no means does justice to the subject. It may be said to consist of five campaigns; those of Fort Donelson, Corinth and Iuka, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and Richmond. Of these each pointed out its commander as the best man for the next, until by simple upward gravitation of natural fitness, he rose to the exalted position of General of all the Armies of the United States.

Grant's operations in Northern Missouri, his dash on Belmont, and his seizure of Paducah, though all creditable military services, were thrown into the shade by the brilliant Fort Donelson campaign, which opened the career of Union successes in the West.

The Fort Donelson expedition was intended to break in two the rebel defensive line, which stretched the whole length of the State of Kentucky, from Columbus on the Mississippi, through Bowling Green, to Cumberland Gap. On this line, the rebels, under General A. S. Johnston, stood looking northward with threatening and

defiant aspect. Grant saw that if he could seize Forts Henry and Donelson, which had been built to shut up the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, the Union gun-boats could range up and down through the heart of rebellion, and that thus the great rebel defensive line, cut through in the middle, would be broken as a chain is when a link is destroyed. He therefore asked leave of his immediate superior, Halleck, to take the forts; received it, concerted his plan of attack with Admiral Foote, and moved from Cairo, February 2d, 1862. The success of this expedition is well known. It should be recorded, however, even in this short summary, that to Grant is due the credit of possessing the military tact and promptness that showed him when to make the decisive attack, and impelled him to do it.

At daylight on Sunday, the 16th, Gen. Buckner, (whose two superior officers, Floyd and Pillow, had run away,) sent a flag of truce asking for commissioners to consider terms of capitulation. Grant replied by the bearer, in a letter, two of whose phrases have become permanent contributions to the proverbial part of the English language:

"Yours of this date, proposing an armistice, and appointment of commissioners to settle terms of capitulation, is just received. No terms other than unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works."

Immediately after Donelson, Grant was made major general of volunteers by commission dated on the day of the fall of the fort, and was placed in command of the "Military District of West Tennessee," consisting of a long triangle with its northern point at Cairo, its base at the South on the Mississippi State line, and its sides the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers. Thus promoted, Grant had already pushed southward. Foote's gun-boats ascended the Cumberland, the troops kept abreast of them; Clarksville, with twenty days' subsistence for Grant's whole army, was occupied on February 20th, four days after the capture of Donelson; and on the 23d, the advance of Buell's army, operating in conjunction with Grant's, entered Nashville.

When the rebel military line already mentioned, running lengthwise of the State of Kentucky, was broken up by Grant's getting through and behind it at Fort Donelson, the rebel leaders sought to hold another east and west line, coinciding nearly with the southern line of Tennessee, along the important Memphis and Charleston Railroad, and their commander in the West, Albert Sydney Johnston, set about concentrating his forces at Corinth, on that road. Halleck, by this time commanding the whole Department of the Mississippi,

now prepared to attack Corinth. It was with this design that Grant's army was sent up the Tennessee, and encamped at Shiloh. But the rebels did not wait to be attacked. They advanced themselves, with the bold and judicious design of beating the army at Shiloh, and then of marching northward, regaining all the ground they had lost, and retaliating by an invasion of the States north of the Ohio.

This hardy attempt was well nigh successful. The night before the battle of Shiloh, Beauregard, as the rebel council of war separated, had prophesied: "To-morrow night we sleep in the enemy's camp."

When the rebels first attacked, Grant was at Savannah, seven miles down the river. Hastening back, he was on the field at the earliest possible moment, and did whatever could be done to withstand the tremendous force of the rebel advance. When Buell came upon the field toward night, the aspect of affairs so struck him that his first inquiry of Grant was, what preparations he had made for retreat.

"I have not despaired of whipping them yet," was the thoroughly characteristic reply. One account adds, that when Buell urged that a prudent general ought to provide for possibilities of defeat, and repeated his inquiry, Grant pointed to his transports and said, "Don't you see those boats?" "Yes," said Buell, "but they will not carry more than ten thousand men, and we have more than thirty thousand." "Well," returned Grant, "ten thousand are more than I intend to retreat with."

The consequence of Shiloh was, the withdrawal of the rebels from their second line of defense, by their evacuation of Corinth on the 30th of May, seven weeks afterwards, the disappointment both of their great plan of a northern invasion and of their secondary plan of holding the Memphis and Charleston Railroad line, and the opening of all Tennessee, and the North of Mississippi and Alabama, to the Union forces; the opening of the Mississippi river from Memphis down to Vicksburg; the subsequent movement which resulted in the battle of Multreesboro and the securing of Chattanooga on the east; and the series of efforts which culminated in the capture of Vicksburg on the west. In short, this battle flung the Rebellion, in the Valley of the Mississippi, into a defensive posture, out of which it never escaped during the remainder of the war.

A few days after the proclamation which gave freedom to the slaves, General Grant expressed his concurrence in it after his sober fashion, by a dry phrase in a general order on the subject of organizing colored regiments. "It is expected," he says, "that all commanders will especially exert themselves in carrying out the policy of the administration, not only in organizing colored regiments, and rendering them

effective, but also in removing prejudice against them."

Vicksburg and Port Hudson were now the only remaining two of that series of positions, most of them really impregnable from the river, by which the rebels had throttled the great artery of western commerce.

His previous career naturally enough pointed out Grant for the command of the Vicksburg campaign; and the event showed that his absolute inability to let go where he had once taken hold, his inevitable continuance in hammering at his object, were exactly the qualities needed.

For a little while, General Halleck himself came and commanded in person against Corinth, General Grant being second in command.

Halleck being appointed General-in-Chief, Grant remained in command of the Army of the Tennessee, and of the military districts of Cairo, West Tennessee and Mississippi. The rebels knew as well as he that his face was set steadfastly towards Vicksburg; and to begin with, they attacked his troops at Corinth and Iuka in great force and with tremendous fury, in order to break up his plans. At both places they were however defeated. In October, the rebel General Pemberton was placed in command in Northern Mississippi, and in the last two months of 1862, took place Grant's first attempt against Vicksburg. The place had already been attacked by the two powerful fleets of Farragut and Davis, during seventy days, from the preceding May 18th to July 27th; but though 25,000 shot and shell had been thrown into it, not one gun had been dismounted, and only seven men were killed and fifteen wounded; a result which showed plainly enough how the place was to be taken if at all.

Grant's movement was to be by land, southward from his post at Corinth, directly at Pemberton; while Sherman was to get footing if possible close to Vicksburg. The loss of Grant's main depot of supplies at Holly Springs, midway in his progress, broke down his part of the plan, and Pemberton then reinforcing Vicksburg, repulsed Sherman and broke down the rest of it.

Grant now established his head-quarters at Memphis, January 10th, 1863, and moved his army towards his goal by water. On the 2d of February, he reached Young's Point, a little above the city; his army was already there and at Milliken's Bend, just below.

His purpose was one; to get his army across to the Vicksburg side and thence to prosecute his attack. First he tried a canal across the neck of the river peninsula opposite Vicksburg. Through this, if he could get the water to accept it as a new bed, he could take his forces below the city, out of reach of its guns, and cross over. But a flood burst into the unfinished canal and drowned out the plan. Then he tried to

clear out a longer water route to do the same thing, through a string of bayous and rivers back in the Louisiana swamps. A fall in the river broke up this plan, as a rise had done that before it. Then he tried a longer route of the same sort, beginning at Lake Providence, seventy-five miles north of Vicksburg, but it was found impracticable. Then resorting to the east side of the Mississippi, he sent a naval expedition to try to penetrate Yazoo Pass, and thence through the inconceivable tangle of the Yazoo swamps and their rivers, to get behind the outer rebel defences north of Vicksburg, and so make a lodgment. But this plan was checkmated by the hasty erection in the heart of the swamp region, at the junction of the Tallahachie and Yazoo rivers, of a powerful fort, which the fleet tried in vain to silence. Then he sent another fleet to try another part of the same monstrous tangle, by way of the Big Sunflower river, but that effort miscarried much as the preceding one did.

The obstinate commander had now tried six assaults upon his prey, and had been busily working at his failures for nearly four months. March 29th, 1863, he set his forces in motion for the seventh and successful effort. This was by what he had in fact recognized from the beginning as the best line of operation—by the south. It was however also the most difficult. As one of the historians of the war observes, a measure of the difficulties offered is given by the fact that Gen. W. T. Sherman was not disposed to advise it. The same writer adds, “It can only be said that there was that in the composition of General Grant’s mind that prompted him to undertake that which no one else would have adventured.”

Colonel Grierson’s cavalry force was now launched down from Tennessee to go tearing through the whole interior of Mississippi, and thoroughly frighten all its people, while he should break up, as he circled far around Vicksburg, as many as possible of the railroads, bridges, and other means of communication, leading from the city back into the country, or from one part of the State to another. Grant’s own troops moved down the river a total distance of seventy-five miles. The fleet and transports ran the batteries and ferried the army across at Bruinsburg; Grant moved at once three miles inland, and May 1st, beat General Bowen at Port Gibson. Then he moved eastward, drove Johnston out of Jackson, an important centre for railroad lines, and broke up all the communications in the neighborhood; then turning short about, he approached Vicksburg by forced marches; on May 10th, met Pemberton at Champion Hills and defeated him; followed him sharply up, forced the passage of the Big Black, drove Pemberton into the city, and on May 16th had formed his lines of attack. After a vigorous siege, whose progress attracted the attention of the

whole civilized world, the place surrendered with 27,000 men, on July 4th, 1863. The whole number of prisoners made since crossing the Mississippi was 37,000. This great achievement freed the Mississippi, cut the rebellion in two, and rendered it out of the question for the rebels to hold the Mississippi Valley.

General Grant’s commission as major-general in the regular army was dated July 4, 1863, the day of the occupation of Vicksburg. In the succeeding October, he was placed in command of the great “Military Division of the Mississippi,” consisting of the three “Departments” of the Ohio, the Cumberland, and the Tennessee, and including the command of four strong armies; his own, Hooker’s, and those of the Cumberland and the Ohio.

Grant’s next victory was that of Chattanooga, November 25, 1863, which substantially repaired the ill effects of the defeat of Rosecrans at Chickamauga, and assured the possession of the mountain citadel from which, in the next spring, Sherman sallied on his way to Atlanta.

On March 10th, 1864, Grant was appointed Lieutenant General, and placed in command of all the armies of the United States.

The Union armies, as Grant himself had already remarked, in his dry way, had hitherto “acted independently, and without concert, like a baulky team, no two pulling together.”

Henceforward in his single strong hand, those armies worked together.

In the campaign of 1864, the first act was the battle of the Wilderness. It was after six days battle that Grant sent to Washington the dispatch which ended with the grim remark, “I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.” Spottsylvania followed, and Cold Harbor; the investment of Petersburg, and that long series of assaults, forays, entrenchments and battles which ended with the surrender of Lee and the explosion of the Rebellion.

Since the close of the war General Grant’s life, although comparatively inactive, has not been wanting in valuable services to his country or in proofs of his exalted patriotism. The most conspicuous of these were furnished in connection with his occupancy of the War Department, and the removal of Sheridan. His acceptance of the position of Secretary of War *ad interim*, after the suspension of Secretary Stanton, in August, 1867, although criticised by some Republican newspapers at the time, was a step taken with the full concurrence of Mr. Stanton, and with a view to reserving the control of that important department for the benefit of the loyal people of the country. When, in January, 1868, the Senate refused to acquiesce in the President’s suspension of Mr. Stanton, and restored him to the War Office, it was the

action of General Grant alone which gave effect to the resolution of that body. Had he not retired from the Department and permitted Secretary Stanton to obtain possession before the President had an opportunity to adopt measures to prevent that occurrence, his reinstatement would have been resisted. This Mr. Johnson subsequently avowed in his correspondence with General Grant, wherein he severely censured the latter for his failure to take part in the conspiracy to prevent Mr. Stanton's restoration.

Of all the papers emanating from General Grant, there is none, perhaps, which met with a warmer response or more completely demonstrated his hearty sympathy with the loyal masses of his countrymen, than his eloquent letter to the President, protesting against the removal of Gen. Sheridan. In that, as in his letter accepting his nomination for the Presidency by the National Republican Convention, he gives utterance to the idea ever prominent in his mind, that the will of the people

should be the supreme rule of action to an administrative officer.

The last-mentioned letter, brief as it is, contains abundant proof that General Grant is just the man the country wants for its next President. Its last four words:—"Let us have peace," will touch an answering chord in every heart, and the whole country will feel that if there is one man among the thirty-five millions who now compose the American people, capable of securing us that blessing and the general prosperity and happiness which are its natural concomitants, that man is General Ulysses S. Grant. The people have witnessed his unpretending patriotism, his singleness of purpose, his freedom from ambition or vain display, and they perceive that great as he is in his character and achievements, he still feels himself to be one of themselves, a man who may be trusted to respect and to execute their will in any position in which he may be placed. So feeling, they will elect him as their President by an overwhelming majority.

SCHUYLER COLFAX.



GENERAL WILLIAM COLFAX, the grandfather of Hon. Schuyler Colfax, was a citizen of New Jersey and was the commanding officer of Gen. Washington's life guards throughout the Revolutionary War. His holding that very confidential and responsible post is sufficient evidence of his steadiness, sense, courage and discretion. It is a further testimonial to the same effect, that Gen. Colfax latterly became one of the most intimate personal friends of the great revolutionary chieftain. Gen. Colfax's wife was Hester Schuyler, a cousin of Gen. Philip Schuyler.

General Colfax's son, Schuyler Colfax, the father of the Speaker, was an officer of one of the New York city banks, and died four months before his son was born.

Schuyler Colfax was born in New York city, March 23, 1823, and was the only son of his widowed mother. He was taught

in the common schools—finished his education at the high school then standing in Crosby street, and at ten years had received all the school training he ever had. He now became a clerk in a store, and after three years removed to Indiana with his mother and her second husband, a Mr. Matthews. They settled in St. Joseph County. Here the youth for four years again served as clerk in the village of New Carlisle. When 17 years old he was appointed deputy county auditor, and for the better fulfilment of his official duties, he now removed to the county town, South Bend, where he has lived ever since.

In 1845, he became proprietor and editor of the "St. Joseph Valley Register," the local paper of his town, South Bend. This was the beginning of his independent career, and if hope had been absent, the prospect would have looked meagre enough. He was a youth of just over twenty-one, and he had two hundred and fifty subscribers. But the youthful editor had hope, and what was far more important, remarkable tact and capacity for his laborious profession. By good fortune and perseverance, he was able to tide over the first dangerous crisis for a poor man who undertakes a large literary enterprise—the period of maximum debt, so fatal to new periodicals. This is a point like the darkest hour just before day, when the newspaper or magazine is, very likely, steadily gaining in reputation and even in circulation, but when the circulation has not quite reached the paying point, and the paper bills have been postponed to the

latest possible moment, while the constant outgoes for paying the journeymen, and for the other weekly office expenses, have kept up their monotonous drain. With Mr. Colfax this period was at the end of the first year of his paper, when he owed \$1,375. The concern gradually became productive, however. A few years afterwards the office was burned down, and the uninsured editor was left to begin business over again. He did so, and has earned a very comfortable living by it, though he is by no means a rich man.

Mr. Colfax's first nomination for Congress was in 1851, and he was beaten, though only by 200 majority, in a district strongly opposed to him in politics. His competitor was that Dr. Graham N. Fitch who was afterwards the congenial yoke-fellow of Mr. Bright in the U. S. Senate, on the side of the South, during Mr. Buchanan's presidency. Mr. Colfax's friends were of opinion, however, that the fatal 200 against him were illegal votes, imported by means of a certain railroad then constructing in those parts, and from among the laborers employed upon it. In 1852 he was a delegate to the Whig National Convention that nominated Gen. Scott, and as at the convention of 1848, was a secretary. He declined a second congressional nomination, and his district, which he had lost by only 200, was now lost by 1,000.

Mr. Colfax was elected to the 34th Congress by 2,000 majority, the previous majority of his competitor having been 1,000 the other way.

It was during the session of 1856, that Mr. Colfax delivered his well known and powerful speech on the bogus "Laws" of Kansas, imposed on that State by the fraud and violence of the pro-slavery ruffians of those days. This speech, a word-for-word quotation of clause after clause of this infamous code, accompanied with a plain, sober and calmly toned explanation of the same, produced a very great effect, and was considered so able a summary of the case involved, that during the Presidential campaign of that year, a half million copies of it were distributed among the voters of the United States. By way of driving quite home the truths of the case, Mr. Colfax, where he quoted the clause which inflicted imprisonment at hard labor *with ball and chain*, upon any one who should ever say "That persons have not the right to hold slaves in this Territory," lifted from his desk and showed to the House an iron ball of the statutory dimensions (viz: 6 inches diameter, weighing about 30 lbs.) apologizing for not also exhibiting the six-foot chain prescribed along with it. Alexander H. Stephens, afterwards Vice President of the Rebels, who sat close by, asked to take this specimen of pro-slavery jewelry for freemen, and having tested its weight, would have returned it. But Mr. Colfax

smilingly asked him to hold it for him until he was through speaking, and while the pro-slavery leader dallied the decoration proposed by his friends for men guilty of free speech, Mr. Colfax, in a few telling sentences, showed that Washington and Jefferson and Webster and Clay had said the words which would have harnessed them, a quaternion of convicts, into the chain-gang of the border ruffians.

Mr. Colfax's constituents, extremely satisfied with his course and abilities, re-nominated him by acclamation while he was in Washington this year, and he was re-elected after the usual joint canvass, although the presidential election of that fall went against his party. That such would be the result, Mr. Colfax had confidently predicted, as a consequence of the third-party nomination of Mr. Fillmore. But he worked with none the less zeal for his principles and his party. He had breadth and soundness and clearness of view enough to sight along the rising plane of the successive anti-slavery votes of 1844, 1848, 1852, and 1856, and to see that the Party of Freedom and right was the Party of the Future; and while doubtless he would have been just as steadfast in doing right if he had no hope of a right-doing government, yet the very best of men works with a more cheery strength when, to use the words of the story, he can "see the chips fly." It was with sentiments of lofty resolution that he wrote, some months before the Republican nomination was made, and just after that of Mr. Fillmore: "Whether the Republican ticket shall be successful or defeated this year, the duty to support it, to proclaim and defend its principles, to arm the conscience of the nation, is none the less incumbent. The Republican movement is based on Justice and Right, consecrated to Freedom, commended by the teachings of our Revolutionary Fathers, and demanded by the extraordinary events of our recent history, and though its triumphs may be delayed, nothing is more certain."

In 1858 Mr. Colfax was again nominated by acclamation, and re-elected by a triumphant majority, and so he has been in every election since, carrying his district against untiring and desperate and enormous efforts directed against him specially as a representative man, not merely by his local opponents, but by the whole forces of every kind which the party opposed to his could concentrate within his district. Such a series of political successes shows not only the power of the public speaker, and the discretion of the politician, but shows also a hearty and vigorous unity of noble thoughts between the constituency and the representative, and also a magnetic personal attractiveness which holds fast forever any friend once made. Mr. Colfax hath friends, because he hath showed himself friendly.

During the 36th Congress, (December, 1859, to March, 1861) Mr. Colfax was chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, and did much and useful work in keeping alive and healthy the somewhat unwieldy machinery of that important institution. He was in particular successful in promoting the extension of mail facilities among the new mining communities in the Rocky Mountain gold fields, and in procuring the passage of the very important bills for the Daily Overland Mail, and for the Overland Telegraph to San Francisco, by way of Pike's Peak and Utah.

It was a matter of course that Mr. Colfax should go with all his heart into the great struggle of 1860. He felt and understood with unusual earnestness and clearness the importance of the principles involved, and the hazards of the political campaign. Into a paragraph or two written some time before the Chicago nomination, he condensed a whole code of political wisdom, and can now be seen to have pointed out Abraham Lincoln as the best candidate, by describing the political availability and ethical soundness of the position Mr. Lincoln then occupied. He wrote :

"We differ somewhat from those ardent contemporaries who demand the nomination of their favorite representative man, whether popular or unpopular, and who insist that this must be done, even if we are defeated. We do agree with them in declaring that we shall go for no man who does not prefer free labor and its extension to slave labor and its extension—who though mindful of the impartiality which should characterize the Executive of the whole Union, will not fail to rebuke all new plots for making the government the propagandist of slavery, and compel promptly and efficiently the suppression of that horrible slave-trade which the whole civilized world has banned as infamous, piratical and accursed. But in a Republican National Convention, if any man could be found, North, South, East or West, whose integrity, whose life, and whose avowals rendered him unquestionably safe on these questions, and yet who could yet poll one, two or three hundred thousand votes more than any one else, we believe it would be both wisdom and duty, patriotism and policy, to nominate him by acclamation and thus render the contest an assured success from its very opening. We hope to see 1860 realize the famed motto of Augustine—"In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity."

That is very broad and sound sense. It

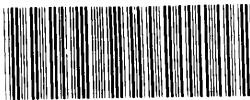
was in exact accordance with this doctrine and with these intimations as to who was the right man, that Mr. Lincoln was nominated, according to the desire of Mr. Colfax's heart; and in the coming campaign in his own very important State of Indiana, he did most valuable service in assuring the victory.

Upon Mr. Lincoln's election, a very powerful influence, made up of public sentiment, the efforts of newspapers, the urgent recommendations of governors and legislatures, and in particular of the Republican presidential electors, members of legislature, congressmen, and whole body of voters of Indiana, united to press upon the new President the appointment of Mr. Colfax to the office of Post Master General. Mr. Lincoln however had resolved to make Hon. C. B. Smith, of Indiana, Secretary of the Interior, and could give no other Cabinet place to that State. But as long as he lived, he loved and respected and trusted Mr. Colfax; and it is on record that "he rarely took any steps affecting the interests of the nation without making his intentions known to Mr. Colfax, in whose judgment he placed the utmost confidence."

Continuing in Congress, Mr. Colfax served with efficient and patriotic fervor in his place, and in December, 1863, was chosen, and has since remained speaker. In this extremely responsible, important and laborious place, his official career has been openly visible to all men, while only those among whom he presides can competently appreciate the rare personal and acquired qualifications which he has so ably exercised—the even good temper, the exhaustless patience, the calm prompt presence of mind, the immense range of honest questions and sly quirks of parliamentary law which he must have at his tongue's end; even the vigorous health and enduring physical frame which enables him to sit through session after session, day after day, without losing his readiness or decisiveness of thought and action.

He has, however, maintained and even increased his reputation as a wise and just legislator, a most useful public servant, a shrewd and kindly chairman, and a skillful parliamentarian. His duties have not been in their nature so brilliant as the deeds of our great commanders by land or by sea; nor so prominent even as the labors of some civilian officials; but they have been such as to require the greatest and most solid and useful of the civic virtues, courage, integrity, forethought, justice, and steady inexhaustible industry.

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